3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
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000 tion, brought me a grass mat to lie on, and then ran to fetch a great dish of *amasulu*, as the thick milk is called. Only once have I eaten more welcome food; when, having been obliged to make a long detour, I lost touch with my food boxes, and got two cobs of soft, juicy maize from a garden I was passing through. That, I think, was the most delicious meal I ever made.

231 Polling of cattle is practised, but only for special reasons; if the animal is bad-tempered, or if the horns grow into the face, or if it is desired to give the cow a youthful appearance with a view to a good sale. The polling is done by specialists, but the cow, carefully bound, is held by the owner himself. Fine-looking horns are scraped to preserve their appearance. There is no gelding of bullocks, as the animals are never used for work of any kind; though European planters and others have proved that they respond well to training.

• 232 A people so keen on cattle rearing have naturally developed some skill in the treatment of the various ills that afflict their stocks. Sympathetic magic plays a considerable part in the treatment. If a cow drops one bull-calf after another, the doctor will give the owner a medicine made into four great pills. Then, if his own wife did not have a daughter as her first-born, the owner engages the services of a woman who did. This daughter she takes upon her back, and, while the owner forcibly opens the mouth of the cow, she drops the pills into it. Taking another supply in her hand, she passes it over the back of the cow from

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
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• 232 neck to tail, saying, "You will now give a cow-calf." What remains of the medicine is put into the stall, and the next calf will be a female. A cow that kills her calf in dropping it is given a medicine which will prevent the recurrence of the fatality. Medicine is also given if the milk is not satisfactory in quantity; and by rubbing in a medicine from tail to neck specialists claim to be able to tell whether a calf in the womb is male or female.

232 754 A disease which does not yield to treatment is the work either of the spirits or of a sorcerer. Divination is resorted to, and the particular spirit operating having been discovered, the appropriate offerings are made, and the disease will now yield to treatment. If it is due to witchcraft, the chief is informed, and he publicly announces that if the animal is not well by next day, he will have the poison test applied to discover the culprit. This, however, if done at all to-day, is done in secrecy, for the chief who permits the poison cup to be administered is liable to severe penalties. But so universal is the belief in witchcraft that the suppression of the poison cup is adduced as the cause of a great increase in the number of sorcerers, and consequently of the general insecurity.

696 [278] Cattle are sometimes deliberately poisoned. A man has a case at court, and it goes against him, although he is convinced that he is in the right. He is ordered to pay a cow to his antagonist; which he does, but he first poisons it with a slow-working drug, and the animal will die in a few days. The successful litigant, although he knows perfectly the cause of the death,

5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
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kind of grass grows there maize will do well, or maybe ground-nuts. Some grass-lands have very poor soil in which no crop at all will grow properly, the one we call *kyusi* for example, or again the one we call *unnyegesi* ("the ant"); no one hoes these lands. Some gardens we hoe on the higher ground, others near the streams, either right in the mud by the water or else in ground that is merely moist. On the higher ground we hoe millet, peas, sweet-potatoes, cassava and some other crops; in the muddy places by the water we hoe yams, building huge ridges for them called *fibimbika*; and there too we sometimes put in (during the dry season) the shoots of sweet potatoes that we shall later plant elsewhere. If the soil is only a little muddy and is mixed with sand, then we plant maize there. The right soil for beans we call *kibumba*—a red soil which is sometimes mixed with sand. Ground-nuts we either plant in the *kibumba* (if it is the sandy kind) or else just in sand. Whenever a man is hoeing a field for millet or ground-nuts or sweet-potatoes, he can tell just from the soil whether his crop will do well or not."[1]

And so also the Nyakyusa well understand the different qualities of pasture. The cattle are herded by small boys but on most mornings one of the men also goes out with the herd to show the boys where to pasture it and what grass-land to avoid.

Into the value of arable land sentiment also enters and men like, *ceteris paribus*, to hoe their gardens where they themselves or their fathers and brothers have hoed before. So too the value of building plots is determined both by practical and emotional considerations: large and relatively level sites on which bananas grow well are preferred to narrow or steeply sloping ones or to sites where bananas do badly, but, on the other hand, of two equally convenient sites that with family associations is normally preferred. And in the case of building sites religious considerations may also enter. A friend of mine told me that, when his father died, he did not move but left his father's site vacant with the new grave upon it; a year or two later his millet crop unaccountably failed and the diviner told him that his father's spirit was angry that no one had "swept his grave," i.e. that the plot had been left vacant. My friend did not actually move, even then, for he preferred his own site; he compromised by the performance of a ritual sacrifice to his father's spirit. But in such cases a man will often move to his dead father's site for fear of further misfortunes.

We have discussed briefly the purposes for which and the techniques by means of which the Nyakyusa use their land, and we have indicated a few of the main considerations which lead them to value some particular

[1] Text written for me by a literate Nyakyusa.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
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partly to the closer spacing of children. Whereas four years between births was conventional formerly, two or less is now usual. One of the characteristics of the present population is a disproportion between the sexes, the females outnumbering the males by 100 to 87·9 even when due allowance has been made for men away at work.[1] This disproportion is characteristic also of African populations in the south[2] and it appears likely that it is due to a wide difference in the survival rate of men and women, but the vital statistics necessary to test this hypothesis are lacking.

The increase in population, and the demand for coffee gardens and rice fields by men who prefer to earn cash by agriculture rather than as migrant labourers, has led to a shortage of land, already acute in the fertile lake-shore plain, and imminent in the coffee-growing villages of the hills.[3] Much land that was previously pasture land has been taken into cultivation, and signs of overstocking are everywhere apparent. Hillsides that in 1938 were covered with grass, waist high, now have a thin stubble. To aggravate matters, the care of stock is less efficient than it used to be because it is left to very small boys, their seniors being occupied with school and hoeing. Often the cattle are both ill nourished and covered with ticks—something that was never seen when they were herded by adolescents and carefully hand-dressed. The villagers themselves are as much concerned as the agricultural officers over the shortage of pasture and the decrease in the milk supply, but they are not prepared to accept the remedies recommended: namely, reduction of stock and stall-feeding. The advice of Europeans on the growing of rice and coffee crops, which they introduced to the district, is acceptable, but the Nyakyusa argue

[1] The Census figures cannot be taken as exact, but they give some indication of the increase in population, and the disproportion between men and women. In 1931 the population of Rungwe District was given as 195,062. In 1948 it was 236,386. In 1931 the proportion of males to females (Kukwe and Nyakyusa in Rungwe district) was 73·6 : 100 (Tanganyika Territory, *Census of the Native Population 1931*). In 1941 the figure for Tukuyu district as a whole was 80 : 100 (Tanganyika Territory, *East African Population Census, 1948*). Allowing for 8,820 men away without wives (estimate for 1954 less 10 per cent), the proportion is 87·9 : 100 (cf. P. H. Gulliver, Report on the Migration of African Workers to the South from the Southern Highland Province, with special Reference to the Nyakyusa of Rungwe District, February 1955, p. 16). The discrepancy in the figures given for *adults* was 62·2 : 100 in 1948, but the ages of males and females classed as 'adult' are uncertain.

[2] D. H. Houghton and E. M. Walton, *The Economy of a Native Reserve*, Keiskammahoek Rural Survey, vol. ii, pp. 24-6, 51. The sex ratio for Keiskammahoek District is 73·8 males : 100 females.

[3] cf. P. H. Gulliver, *Nyakyusa Land and Population*, 1956.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
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that they have always been cattle men and they need no instruction on cattle. The tension over stock limitation and soil conservation, so acute in many parts of Africa, is only just appearing in Rungwe district, but potentially it is serious.

Pressure on land, and the planting of a valuable long-term crop such as coffee, have undermined the traditional organization of age-villages. The old men are no longer prepared to move to make way for their sons and, without a new deal in land each generation, the territorial separation of the generations is blurred. Boys villages are no longer visible in the hills near Rungwe mission, partly because so many young men are away, either at school or in employment, but largely because most of the land is taken up with coffee gardens. Homesteads are being built farther apart as men lay out coffee round their houses, and sons often build on a corner of their father's estate instead of in a separate village. On the plain, also, the pressure of population blurs the boundaries between generations. Only in the least heavily populated middle belt are numerous boys' villages still clearly visible, and here too a 'coming out' has recently been celebrated, with some redistribution of land. The scarcest land, that in old volcanic craters, was always inherited, like cattle, not reallocated each generation, and almost all cultivated land is now treated in this way. In many chiefdoms, therefore, a young man looks to his father or senior brother for land, rather than to the village headman, and inheritance is supremely important. But the form of inheritance is changing: property now goes directly from father to son, not as formerly to each of a group of full brothers before reverting to the senior son of the eldest of them. The claims of more distant kinsmen on inherited stock are less than they used to be; such stock becomes the exclusive property of father and sons, rather than property in which members of a lineage of three or four generations have reciprocal rights. The main economic bond which held the lineage together, the exchange of cattle, is thus broken.

Formerly a marriage was a contract between lineages rather than between individuals. A girl was betrothed before puberty to a man of her father's choice and should he die she was still regarded as married to his heir. Should she die a sister replaced her. Ideally a marriage bond between lineages lasted for generations, each man who died being replaced by a brother or son, each woman by a sister or brother's daughter. The choice of a partner in marriage

14: Lehmann E-5 (1939)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
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Notes on the daily life of the Nyakyusa (Tanganyika Territory)

Cf. Sociologus 1951, I, 1 S. 53 ff.

By F. Rudolf Lehmann

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576 1. *Greetings.* The first thing to strike a visitor to the Nyakyusa country north of Lake Nyasa on passing through one of the numerous picturesque villages surrounded by banana groves is the way of greeting customary among these people. "*Ukuponya*" is the Nyakyusa word for "to greet". In the morning you are greeted with the exclamation: "*ugonile* (pl. *mugonile)*", which literally means: "Did you sleep well?" And you may answer in the same way, or, in fuller form as you can hear it from the mouth of the natives: "*ae'e ndaga, ugonile*", or "*ugonile yoyoque*". "*ae'e ndaga*" may be used with all answers, meaning: thanks! At noon or in the afternoon you will hear: "*uvombide*", you have worked, or, have you worked? Then, according to the case, you may answer: "*muvombide avanda*", you, men, have worked, or, generally: "*mwangere*", which is equivalent to the Swahili: "*habari gani?*". If you greet a person in the evening with the words: "*ugonege*", may you sleep well, the person thus addressed will answer: "*kagone!*".

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[512] 2. *Milking.* The first task in the daily life of the Nyakyusa people is for the men to milk the cows. This is done in the morning before the cattle are driven out to graze and again in the evening when they return. But the cattle are also driven back to the village at noon when they are usually fumigated standing in the smoke of a fire for which cow dung and banana leaves are used, a process designed to remove vermin from the skin of the cattle. The animals seem to be very fond of this procedure. They stand quietly in the smoke gazing at the passers-by.

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[462] 3. *Hoeing.* "Hoeing is the work of men, planting weeding, reaping is the work of women. The men, young and old, hoe for about four hours on most mornings of the year; in the lower altitudes they begin well before sunrise and finish about 9 a. m., on the u[illegible]lateau they